

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Following the title, please insert the following heading and paragraph:

Cross-Reference to Prior Application

This is a U.S. national phase application under 35 U.S.C. §371 of International Patent Application No. PCT/JP2003/015970 filed December 12, 2003, and claims the benefit of Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-362957 filed December 13, 2002, each of which is incorporated by reference herein in their entirety. The International Application was published in Japanese on July 1, 2004 as WO 2004/054482 under PCT Article 21(2).

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A disposable absorbent article including an absorbent article body which comprises a liquid-permeable topsheet, a liquid-impermeable backsheet, an absorbent core disposed between said liquid-permeable topsheet and said liquid-impermeable backsheet, and a cover sheet attached to the outer surface of said liquid-impermeable backsheet, wherein:

said absorbent article body has a rear waist region, a crotch region, and a front waist region, which are integrally arranged in the longitudinal direction of said absorbent article body, said rear waist region and said front waist region adapted to be respectively located at the rear and front waist side of a wearer, and said crotch region has leg opening portions at both lateral side edges thereof;

by joining each side edge portion of said rear waist region and the corresponding side edge portion of said front waist region, a waist opening becomes formed around the waist of the wearer and a pair of leg openings become formed around the upper thighs of the wearer;

said absorbent article body also has:

one or more waist opening elastic members extending circumferentially around said waist opening,

a plurality of rear waist elastic members that are stretchable in the widthwise direction of said absorbent article body, and

a plurality of front waist elastic members that are stretchable in the widthwise direction of said absorbent article body;

said rear waist elastic members form a rear elastic area in said rear waist region;

said front waist elastic members form a front elastic area in said front waist region;

a greater number of rear waist elastic members are provided than front waist elastic members; and

said rear elastic area is broader than said front elastic area with respect to the longitudinal direction of said absorbent article body.

2. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The disposable absorbent article as claimed in according to claim 1, wherein:

said rear waist elastic members are ~~arrange~~ arranged so that the distance between each rear waist elastic member and its adjacent rear waist elastic member is ~~nearly~~ approximately equal to the distance between each front waist elastic member and its adjacent front waist elastic member and that, when each side edge portion of said rear waist region and the corresponding side edge portion of said front waist region are joined, both ends of some number of rear waist elastic members are respectively connected to the ends of the corresponding front waist elastic members.

3. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The disposable absorbent article as claimed in according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein:

the distance between said waist opening elastic members and the portion of said rear waist elastic members closest to said waist opening elastic members is ~~nearly~~ approximately equal to said distance between each rear waist elastic member and its adjacent rear waist elastic member.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The disposable absorbent article as claimed in any one of the claims from~~ according to claim 1 to claim 3, wherein:

said distance between said waist opening elastic members and the portion of said rear waist elastic members closest to said waist opening elastic members is ~~nearly~~ approximately equal to the distance between said waist opening elastic members and the portion of said front waist elastic members closest to said waist opening elastic members, and

said absorbent core is arranged so as not to overlap said front elastic area while overlapping at least a part of said rear elastic area.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The disposable absorbent article as claimed in any one of the claims from~~ according to claim 1 to claim 3, wherein:

the portion of said front waist elastic members closest to said leg opening portions is located closer to said leg opening portions than is the portion of said rear waist elastic members closest to said leg opening portions, and

said absorbent core is arranged so as not to overlap said rear elastic area while overlapping at least a part of said front elastic area.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The disposable absorbent article as claimed in any one of the claims from~~ according to claim 1 to claim 3, wherein:

the distance separation between said leg opening portions and the portion of said rear waist elastic members closest to said leg opening portions is ~~nearly~~ approximately equal to the distance between said leg opening portions and the portion of said front waist elastic members closest to said leg opening portions, ~~[[,]]~~ and

said absorbent core is arranged so as not to overlap said rear elastic area while overlapping at least a part of said front elastic area.